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ABSTRACT

This paper asserts that most of the urban and suburban schools are racially and ethnically isolated. Consequently, what are needed are curricula suited to a culturally diverse population which does not attend culturally and ethnically diverse schools. Thus, one issue requiring examination, it is stated, is the extent to which curricula are similar or different for culturally diverse student populations in contrast to culturally homogeneous groups. A definition of cultural pluralism proposed by the National Coalition for Cultural Pluralism suggests curricular strands that deal with (1) ethnic and cultural awareness of one's own identity, (2) understanding of other cultures, and, (3) awareness of the nature of racism and sexism as these affect individual and group behavior. It is a definition which has implications for both cognitive and affective development of the individual. While it is held that schools must certainly do a far more effective job in the basic skills areas, an education for a culturally pluralistic society must have a broader focus which deals with affective and cognitive development, with personal and interpersonal skills, and with an understanding by the individual of who he is and how he relates to others. Changes are considered to be needed in content, strategies, resources-but most of all in the people who create the conditions for curriculum and instruction. (Author/JM)

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REVIEW
ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
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New Curricula for Multi-Ethnic Schools

by A. Harry Passow

Alice Miel has defined curriculum as a changing assemblage of opportunities for educative experience. The elements of curriculum which must be ordered and reordered into opportunities for experience are time, space, material and human resources. Thus, the process of curriculum development involves many kinds of decisions: What is to be taught, to whom, when, how, under what conditions, by whom; and how are the results to be evaluated. There are many such curricular design decisions with respect to the "formal" curriculum. And then, there is the "hidden curriculum."

The hidden curriculum or, as William Kvaraceus calls it, "the subliminal curriculum," is the way of life in the school which tells the student how he should behave. It is the curriculum in every school which stems from the particular culture and subcultures of that setting and it is a prime determiner of behavior. Charles Pinderhughes (1967) discusses the importance of the school climate or environment:

> What the pupils are learning from one another is probably just as important as what they are learning from the teachers. This is what I refer to as the hidden curriculum. It involves such things as how to think about themselves, how to think about other people, and how to get along with them. It involves such things as values, codes, and styles of behavior . . .

The kind of climate created in the classroom is an important determinant of what children will learn and how they will learn. This is as important as the more formal subject matter, the selection of which we usually give much more attention.

Unity with Diversity

When we speak of "new curricula for multi-ethnic schools," there is an assumption that our schools are indeed multi-ethnic. The fact is that most of our urban and suburban schools are racially and ethnically isolated. They are not multi-ethnic or multi-racial. Consequently, we are asking for curricula suited to a culturally diverse population which does not attend culturally and ethnically diverse schools. Thus one issue requiring examination is the extent to which curricula are similar or different for culturally diverse student populations in contrast to culturally homogeneous groups.

The National Coalition for Cultural Pluralism has defined cultural pluralism as "a state of equal co-existence in a mutually supportive relationship within the boundaries or framework of one nation of people of diverse cultures with significantly different patterns of belief, behavior, color, and in many cases with different languages. To achieve cultural pluralism, there must be unity with diversity. Each person must be aware of and secure in his own identity, and be willing to extend to others the same respect and rights that he expects to enjoy himself."

This definition suggests curricular strands that deal with (a) ethnic and cultural awareness of one's own identity, (b) understanding of other cultures, and (c) awareness of the nature of racism and sexism as these affect individual and group behavior. It is a definition which has implications for both cognitive and affective development of the individual. While schools must certainly do a far more effective job in the basic skills areas, an education for a culturally pluralistic society must have a broader focus which deals with affective and cognitive development, with personal and interpersonal skills, and with an understanding by the individual of who he is and how he relates to others.

Curricular Meaningfulness

In *Toward Humanistic Education* (1970), Gerald Weinstein and Mario Fantini argue that most of our contemporary curriculum reform efforts "have done much to make the process and curriculum structure more significant in terms of academic subjects, but they have not touched the core of the problem: to make the content more *personally* meaningful, especially for the poor, minority-group child." Specifically, Weinstein and Fantini argue that current curricula lack intrinsic relevance for

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many children. They cite four factors contributing to this condition:

1. Failure to match teaching procedures to children's *learning styles.*
2. The use of material that is outside or poorly related to the learners *knowledge* of his physical realm of experience.
3. The use of teaching materials and methods that ignore the learner's *feelings.*
4. The use of teaching content that ignores the *concerns* of the learners.

Sterling McMurrin (quoted in *Toward Humanistic Education)* describes the cognitive and affective functions of education as being directed toward the knowing and feeling. The cognitive function, he asserts "is directed to the achievement and communication of knowledge." The affective function, on the other hand, "pertains to the practical life – to the emotions, the passions, the dispositions, the motives, the moral and esthetic sensibilities, the capacity for feeling, concern, attachment or detachment, sympathy, empathy, and appreciation."

Affective Eduation

Curricular relevance, Fantini and Weinstein argue, is that which connects the affective or feeling aspect with the cognitive or knowing aspect. The basis for motivation for learning is a recognition of the child's inner concerns and a respect for him as a person – respect for his needs, wants, concerns, joys, fears, anxieties, hopes and aspirations. By validating the child's experience and feelings, the school tells the child that he knows something and that he is worth something. To connect with the learner, Fantini and Weinstein (1968) urge that curriculum planners move toward a *diversified* rather than a uniform curriculum, an *experiental* rather than a symbolistic curriculum, an *immediate* rather than a remote curriculum, a *participating* rather than an academic curriculum, a *reality-oriented* rather than an antiseptic one, and a *why* rather than a *what* curriculum. They propose schools move toward an affective curriculum as a basis of relating the cognitive and affective.

Many curriculum efforts are focused on remediation rather than reconceptualization or redevelopment. Yet, as Hilda Taba and Deborah Elkins (1966) put it, remedial measures that simply repeat what students have already failed are not an answer. Qualitatively different programs are needed. The same general principles of learning are applicable for all learners. Different emphases, strategies, and uses of resources are necessary but the learning principles and processes are basically the same. Remediation measures do not provide adequate substitutes for effective developmental teaching and learning. Taba and Elkins suggest continual, comprehensive diagnosis to ascertain students' backgrounds of experience, their feelings about school and themselves, their values, their basic unmet emotional needs which retard and impede learning, the areas of their concern, the concepts they bring to school as the basis for curriculum planning.

A balanced program of instruction, Taba and Elkins propose, must take into account four areas of objectives – knowledge, thinking, attitudes and skills. These four areas need to be considered simultaneously, using different strategies and approaches in each. Knowledge (acquisition of facts) does not automatically produce a way of thinking using those facts. Thinking is an active process, while facts often can be learned by passive absorption. Attitudes can be best developed through experiences and materials which impact on individual feelings. In turn, skills are developed primarily through practice, preferably repeated practice in different contexts.

Impact of Literature

Curriculum planners must provide for a wide variety of teaching-learning strategies and materials. The use of a single text, for instance, obviously cannot provide for the range and diversity one finds in any classroom. As Taba and Elkins point out, literature can serve many different purposes. It can be used for sensitivity training, as a means of extending limited experience with human behavior and the problems of human relations. Referring to the least advantaged, they observe:

> Each individual grows up in a cultural shell because his immediate socializing group . . . is culturally unique and hemmed in. The avenues to the mainstreams of culture are usually further closed by segregation of residence areas, by marginal existence, and by social isolation. Experiences in such hemmed-in cultural climates tend to cultivate ethnocentricity, in the sense of a tendency to interpret all behavior, values, and motivations in terms of the limitations of these settings, to develop a limited self-concept and either a defeatist or aggressive-hostile orientation toward the future.

Literature can provide a means for transmitting values, mores, and ways of behaving essential to maturity. The emotional and intellectual content of literature can have an impact on the lives of youth. As Fred Wilhelms (1961) reminds us:

> literature is the great repository of insights into the human heart and mind . . . we can select – and help students select – so that our literature courses go straight to the heart of children and adolescents, with their fears and frustrations, their self-doubts, their hopes and their aspirations. We can help youngsters to bring their feelings about themselves into perspective.

There is a wealth of literature which provides relevant content for children and youth at all stages of development and serves other purposes than simply enabling the student to sound out

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words. The problem, as Charles Spiegler (1964) says, is "to give him a book that hits him where he lives!"

Racism by Design

Mildred Dickeman (1973) discusses teaching cultural pluralism. She asserts that our schools are racist by design: "Their racism is part of a larger philosophy, an ethnocentrism dedication to the remodelling of citizens to conform to a single homogeneous acceptable model." Looking at the historical development of education in America, Dickeman concludes that what emerged was a mass system of public indoctrination with two major functions: (1) to create a docile, controllable lower laboring class which adhered sufficiently to the values and myths of the ruling class so that it was not apt to question its place in the society, and (2) to select the few who possessed loyalty and conformity in values, attitudes, behavior and appearance to be chosen as replacements for the elite. Dickeman argues that the public education system is our major social-sorting mechanism and a prime means for assuring social control.

Dickeman, as do many other social critics, rejects the notion of America as a "melting pot" because far too many individuals have stuck to the bottom of the pot. A look at the curriculum, she argues, clearly reveals how the schools define and perpetuate the mythology:

> For the last hundred years at least, school texts, in picture and story, in history and literature, have presented this myth to the young. The actors in these texts have been and still are almost exclusively members of the dominant society, Anglo-Saxon, White English-speaking, depicted with dress, manners, customs and family roles all deemed acceptably middle class. In those cases where it is essential to refer to and explain the existence of ethnic differences, reference is made to the myth of equal opportunity and the melting pot, or for those at the bottom, assurance is given that the lower orders are happy in their places, the slave on his plantation, the worker in the factory, the Indian roving his reservation.

Such a curriculum, Dickeman maintains, informs every child in the public school that if he is to enter the dominant middle class, he must acquire the characteristics and the behaviors of that group and, more important, he must abandon his own heritage – "whatever differences he possesses, whatever ethnic identity . . . has characterized his home and family." The curriculum says to the child that his own heritage is irrelevant. It teaches "that nothing which he brings to the school, none of his sociocultural heritage matter."

Dickeman sees most recent curriculum reform presumably designed to eradicate cultural and racial bias lacking in understanding of the racism which permeates the schools and society as a whole. There has been little basic change in the messages communicated:

> Most reforms seem to be modifications of the racial uniformity of success models presented to the child. This has been done most commonly through revision of text materials, and through increased recruitment of minority staff members. Most textual changes of commercial publishers have substituted only biological, not cultural variety. Dick and Jane in blackface or brownface retain all the usual middle-class social and behavioral traits. This, of course, is not cultural pluralism at all but a reiteration of the old ideology that one can succeed even though possessed of deviant biological traits, if one adopts the requisite culture. None of the problems of cultural diversity, alienation and ethnocentrism discussed above have been recognized here.

Resources To Be Used

To relate classroom goals to the cultural pluralism of students and their communities, Dickeman suggests that the teacher draw on four types of resources: (1) teachers free to select and develop curricular materials relevant to student needs; (2) student's concerns and life styles used in classroom activities to create "a place where he can learn to express, understand and evaluate the personal and social facts of his existence;" (3) members of the local communities (where such communities are characterized by ethnic diversity) since student concerns and experiences force "all students to focus on each other's ethnic identities and their consequences;" and (4) teachers who "recognize that their own ethnic heritages are valuable, that their own family histories are relevant to learning and teaching."

"All of our curricular materials must be used to teach about life in the city."

Even in schools which are not racially and ethnically diverse, there is greater opportunity to achieve these same goals than is usually recognized. This opportunity is made possible by the diversity to be found within a presumably homogeneous population. Through the exploration of individual differences *within* groups, students can begin to understand backgrounds and heritages other than their own.

A 1972 yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies, *Teaching about Life in the City*, argues that the "social studies curriculum must focus on and teach about the immediate realities and problems facing human beings in the city. Equally important, we must do all in our power to intervene in vital aspects of our urban environment." It is, of course, not just the social studies curriculum – but all of our curricular materials which must be used to teach about life in the city.

In that yearbook, Daniel Levine points to four important contributions institutions can make in the search for identity by metropolitan residents:

> (1) to provide every young person with opportunities to test and define himself against difficult challenges in the physical and social environment; (2) to encourage the development of shared values and sentiments which help the young acquire a sense of authentic reality precisely because they are widely shared; (3) to work to-

ward achieving certain kinds of stability in the physical environment of a rapidly-changing urban society; and (4) to offer the young guidance in exploring and experimenting with a variety of identities.

Levine suggests that the social studies curriculum be designed to immerse students in the study of urban and metropolitan affairs with experiences "provided in a setting which brings them into close contact with others of differing social, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds." He urges that a larger proportion of the students' learning experiences involve first-hand participation in metropolitan affairs with emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving. To achieve this focus, increased flexibility in scheduling is needed, especially if greater opportunities are to be offered youth for the performance of socially-important and personally-meaningful community work. Levine also urges that students be involved in determining what to learn and how to go about it.

Proposals for Reform

Recent proposals for reform in secondary education have advocated increased options for youth through opportunities for studying and working outside the classroom and school walls. Several have endorsed the proposal of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1972) committee for an approach called "Action Learning." Action Learning is defined as "learning from experience and associated study that can be assessed and accredited by an educational institution. It may be in paid jobs, in non-paid volunteer work, or in personal performance. . . ." Surveys of activities which could be categorized under the rubric of action learning indicate that more and more such learning experiences are being provided in agencies, institutions, and community settings.

One approach to "new curricula" focuses on teaching a particular ethnic or racial group experience – the Black Experience, the Hispanic Experience, for examples. Black Studies, Puerto Rican Studies, and Chicano Studies, have been developed to provide insight into self- and group-identity. Such studies must include a carefully planned knowledge base. Teachers must know the basic facts, concepts, generalizations, and theories about ethnic minority groups if they are to design curriculum and instruction about these cultures intelligently. They must be able to recognize and correct the distortions, stereotypes, neglect and racism found in materials of instruction. The knowledge base derives from several sources: ethnic perspective of a group's history; analysis of the social conditions within the ethnic group itself; examination of the group's culture. In addition to a carefully researched knowlegde base, an ethnic studies program must have an equally firmly-based affective component.

James Banks (1973) has criticized some of the developments in the Black Studies programs which emerged in response to demands for Black history and Black studies:

> Publishers, seeking quick profits, have responded to the Black history movement by producing a flood of textbooks, tradebooks, and multi-media "kits" many of dubious value. Most of the "integrated" materials now on the market are little more than old wine in new bottles, and contain white characters painted brown, and the success of "safe" Blacks such as Crispus Attucks and Booker T. Washington. The problems which powerless ethnic groups experience in America are de-emphasized or ignored.

The reason few programs are soundly conceived and implemented, Banks maintains, is that the goals for such programs are unclear and confused, lacking clear rationales and direction. Banks' statement of purpose for black history has meaning for all ethnic groups: "The goal of Black history should be to help students develop *the ability to make reflective decisions so that they can resolve personal problems and, through social action, influence public policy and develop a sense of political efficacy.*" Banks' argument is that the acquisition of effective decision-making and social-action skills is essential to the physical and psychological liberation of Black Americans – skills which can be employed in solving personal, group, and public problems. Banks suggests that the development of effective political activists is the ultimate goal of social studies for Black students. Certainly this is one dimension of new curricula for ethnic groups and its attainment involves studying the group's experience from both an historical and interdisciplinary perspective.

Bilingual Education

For large numbers of children and youth, English is not their mother tongue. Alan Exelrod, discussing the tragic price of ignoring minority cultures, observes that:

> The Chicano child brings to the school a different culture and language than that of the Anglo. When he comes to school he is often forbidden to speak his native language and his cultural traditions are ignored. Often the school he attends is inferior to the school just down the road attended primarily by Anglos. His academic life is tainted with the prejudice and indifference of Anglo teachers who see little prospect for his academic success. He sees few Chicano teachers and fewer Chicano administrators.

Thus, it is not only the problems of language that many Spanish-speaking children face but those of emotional and social adjustment that stem from the conflict of cultures in

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such settings. Literature on the Native American – both on the reservation and in the city – describes similar problems of education and mental health.

There has been a significant growth of interest in bilingual education. Frank Cordasco (1973) has pointed to the irony of spending millions of dollars to teach students a foreign language while expending little or nothing to develop language competency which already is found among students as a result of their cultural backgrounds. In fact, Cordasco points out, "we go to all sorts of trouble to *eradicate* the child's language and substitute the school's *before* we begin to teach him. This is more than a contradiction; it is absurd!"

Bilingual education, Cordasco emphasizes, involves instruction in two languages – the child's mother tongue and English serving as the media of instruction of the curriculum. It involves development of the student's fluency and mastery of English while, at the same time, increasing his competency in his mother tongue.

There are other aspects and dimensions of curricula for multi-ethnic schools that might be discussed: helping students to clarify their values and those of their cultures, deepening the students' insights into the existence of a web of cultures to which each individual belongs. Education for cultural pluralism cannot be discussed without attending to the racism and sexism which permeates all of our institutions.

Setting a Tone

As important as knowledge and concepts are in nurturing cultural pluralism, attitude and affective behaviors are equally significant. Central to the affective climate is, of course, the teacher who sets the tone and communicates by both his verbal and non-verbal behavior his valuing of the child as an individual who has worth. Staten Webster (1973) suggests that the most essential task facing the teacher is believing sincerely that the child can learn and communicating this faith in the child to him. Webster asserts that the teacher must know the student and his culture and have some idea of and feelings for what it means to be a member of an ethnic or racial minority in America. The teacher must know about the students' perceptions of self, their fears and anxieties, as well as their strengths and personal resources. What the teacher must do, Webster concludes, is to love his students – love in Eric Fromm's sense of five dimensions: knowing, understanding, respecting, caring, and giving. The teacher loves the child when he makes an effort to know him and his perception of the world. He understands the child as he comprehends the feelings, attitudes, dreams, aspirations and fears even as these differ from his own. The teacher must respect the child as a person even when the child's behavior produces feelings of failure in the teacher and when the child's values and attitudes differ from his. The teacher cares for the child when he is concerned about the child's performance and his self-destructive attitudes and behaviors. Finally, Webster says, "the educator must let these behaviors culminate in the ultimate act in the sequence of loving, namely that of giving his talents and himself to the quest that the student will succeed."

Changes in Progress

Jack D. Forbes (1971) observes that:

> The tide today is beginning to shift away from the whitewashing of cultural differences which prevailed in earlier years, toward a new acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity in society and in the schools. The change will most certainly not be a painless one, for it requires the conscious rethinking by Anglo-Americans of their relationship to other groups with which they share this continent, a number of them indigenous to it. But the change is coming.

continued

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Changes are needed in both the formal and informal curriculum, the planned and the subliminal. Changes are needed in content, strategies, resources – but most of all in the people who create the conditions for curriculum and instruction. □

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This paper is a revised version of a presentation at a recent workshop on "Curriculum for Ethnic Minorities" sponsored by the General Assistance Center at Teachers College. The General Assistance Center is a service project of the Institute for Urban and Minority Education.

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